

Approved

**Town of Brentwood  
Budget Committee**  
Minutes of December 15, 2014

*Present:* Elyse Seeley (Chair), Bill Faria, John Lyon, Dianne Vosgien, (School Board Rep), Malcolm Allison, Krista Steger. Jeff Bryan (Selectmen Rep), Barbara Zvodar.

*Visitors:* Lisa Swasey, Amy Ransom (SAU 16), Ron Kew (Swasey School Principal), Melissa Litchfield, Paula Rushia, Wayne Robinson

Chairperson Elyse Seeley called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Motion to approve draft minutes from December 1, 2014, Jeff/John, Approved as amended 5-0-1 abstention (Malcolm).
2. Discussed schedule and set Budget Committee Hearing date. Our Budget Committee Hearing is set for Monday, February 9, 2015, at 7:30 pm, and snow date is Thursday February 12. Our budget needs to be given to the Select Board by February 18, 2015. We will have a last meeting prior to the Budget Hearing at 7:00 pm. (Town Meeting has been set for March 14, 2015, at 9:00 am, and School District Hearing is set for Friday March 6, 2015 at 6 PM). Budget Committee Hearing needs to be posted by January 30, 2015.
3. We set the remainder of our Budcom meetings for January 12, 19, 26, and February 2, as needed. (Malcolm requested to attend the January 12 meeting electronically).
4. We discussed the total Town Budgets. Krista's handout listed what has been reviewed and proposed to date and compared to the last year. Although all the budgets have not been received and reviewed we are at a 4.3% increase and we have not seen any warrant articles. Last year (2013/2014) was an increase of approximately 6%, but was decreased due to a reduction in warrant articles, which brought the increase down to 3.84%. This resulted in a \$.275 cent increase in taxes for the town. When including the Coop and Swasey School, the average tax bill has gone up \$575.00 (from an equation using all tax bills divided by all taxable properties).
5. We also received for review, a summary of the Trust Funds balances. This is the Capital Funds, revenue received, and any increase/decrease in the Trust Funds.

**BUDGETS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

1. **Fire EMS Budget - 4215-18:** Motion to approve, in the amount of \$97,224.00, Bill/Dianne, This is a reduction from last year. It is accounted for in a separate fund (the ambulance revolving fund). The revenue is from ambulance billings and services provided, created to purchase vehicles and related equipment. This is an in and out budget, with income controlled by the Treasurer (that is money that is generated from users/insurance payments is received and reported bi-weekly by the Treasurer) and is to be used in the future for ambulance replacement. Approved, in the amount of \$97,224.00, 4-3.

2. **Police Department – 4210-17:** Motion to approve in the amount of \$653,814.00, Jeff/Krista. This budget reflects an increase of 13.8%. The package we reviewed includes salaries and personnel numbers from different and similar towns. It also includes a request for a sixth full time officer and an additional 24 part-time hours. The Chief requests two officers per shift except only one officer on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights. The goal is to have two officers on all shifts. We also reviewed Rockingham County call increases for the last year. Budcom requested the Chief to rework the numbers to include the additional full time officer and the additional part time hours but to reduce the merit increases to 2% to keep his budget increase in line. Jeff withdrew his motion for approval. Motion to defer pending the additional requested information, Dianne/Krista, approved to table, 5-2.
3. **Health Officer – 4419-31:** Motion to approve, in the amount of \$1.00, Malcolm/Krista. This is a place holder, approved, 7-0.
4. **Animal Control Officer – 4414-30:** Motion to approve, in the amount of \$1.00, Jeff/Dianne. This function is being performed, on an as needed basis, by the current PD staff. Approved, 7-0. place holder, approved, 7-0.
5. **Street Lighting – 4316-23:** Motion to approve, in the amount of \$1.00, Jeff/Dianne. This is a place holder, approved, 7-0.
6. **Waste Collection – 4323 and Waste Disposal – 4324:** Motion to approve, in the amount of \$270,498.00, Jeff/Krista. This also includes recycling. This budget is a reduction, and still includes six months with our current contractor, so actuals are projected to be lower. This new five-year contract will reduce waste collection fees substantially over the contract period. Approved, 7-0.

## **BOARD of SELECTMEN Update**

Jeff had nothing additional.

## **SCHOOL BOARD Update**

Dianne had a draft school budget. This has not been approved by the School Board but is a good draft of what the numbers will look like when finalized. Ron Kew provided some additional information from our last meeting. He had a grid for the non-union employees which we are able to review. There was lively discussion of place holder numbers. and what they represent. These include a 3% raise for the support staff (and also move across the steps) Ron indicated that 12 of the staff are at the step ten level, and the remaining 6 staff members are below that step ten.

Dianne stated that School Board has not had a chance to review and vote on a new three-year teacher contract which has been approved by the union. Amy discussed the increases in NH retirement rates as well. Amy also discussed switching Workmen's Comp, Unemployment Insurance, and Property Liability, from LGC to Primex resulted in a substantial reduction in insurance rates. The switch is bundled and that is how the SAU was able to get a reduction.

Ron indicated he wants to change the receptionist position to admin assistant since both are performing the same functions. One is at the step ten level and gets a 3% raise and the other is at step nine will get a step and the 3% as well. There was also discussion of the uncertified staff increases and that these positions do not have a contract. There was discussion regarding SPED expenses for out of district placements and also transportation costs associated with SPED. The state may offset some of this expense but the district does not have an exact number, though it will be reduced some amount by state offset.

There was some discussion that with teachers getting a raise, part of one teacher salary being reduced, para-professionals getting a 3% raise, and a recommendation for a new full day Kindergarten program, the sense is that this is not any more palatable to the town than last year's warrant, which was rejected by voters. The overall opinion of BudCom members is that the budget needs to be reduced quite a bit more based on student enrollment (down for year three) and average class sizes being substantially lower than both School Board and State recommendations for class size. Members asked Board to take a hard look at the budget and find cuts.

School Board needs to discuss and consider before the school budget is finalized and returned to Budcom for consideration. Ron Kew and School Board members present think this is a fair reflection of what is needed for the operation of the school for the coming year.

**Public Comment:**

Lisa Swasey, also a teacher at Swasey, asked to correct a misperception. During Ostrowski's employment there were 420 students, two curriculum coordinators and there is no one on staff at the PhD level. There has been a SPED increase that has mandated requirements. The student population is distributed in a different method now than before. Also, by law, teachers are required to continue to take classes to remain certified. The school is a gem and no one wants to reduce the quality of education which, in turn, keeps property values high. These are all factors that should be remember and considered.

Next meeting will be January 12, at 7PM.

9:10 pm , Motion to adjourn, Dianne/Malcolm, approved 7-0

Minutes respectfully submitted by William C Faria